

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

240441Z Jan 05

UNCLAS AMMAN 000587

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: LOW IRAQ OUT-OF-COUNTRY VOTER REGISTRATION TOTALS
CONTINUE

REF: A. AMMAN 468

[B](#). AMMAN 342

[C](#). AMMAN 293

OCV Registration Results Continue Low

[1](#)1. IOM-run, out-of-country (OCV) voter registration for Iraqis in Jordan continues to be marked by low turnouts, widespread confusion, and apparent apathy among many potential voters. As of COB Saturday, January 22, six days after the beginning of registration, only 10,941 Iraqis were registered in Jordan out of an estimated pool of up to 200,000 potential registrants. This latest figure reflects a steady uptic in daily registration totals, but still falls short of initial registration goals of fifty per cent turnout or more. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) OCV headquarters in Amman, which administers the OCV effort internationally, reports that worldwide turnout after six days totaled about 188,000 out of an estimated pool (recently calibrated downwards) of approximately 1.1 million eligible voters.

Iranian Exception

[1](#)2. According to IOM, the most impressive OCV registration turnout so far has been in Iran, where over fifty percent of IOM's currently estimated voter pool of approximately 80,000 were registered by January 22. In contrast, only 10,500 Iraqis had registered by January 22 in Syria, the country with the largest estimated pool (approximately 250,000) of eligible OCV participants. U.S. and U.K. registration turnout as of day six is at about ten percent of IOM's revised estimate of their potential OCV pool.

Registration Deadline Extended...

[1](#)3. In an effort to facilitate worldwide registration turnout, IOM announced on January 20 a two-day extension to the OCV registration process, originally scheduled to end on January 23. The new deadline is Tuesday, January 25. IOM also extended daily OCV registration operating hours from 5PM until 7PM in all OCV countries except the Netherlands. In a possibly related development, the GOJ announced on January 20 a 75% reduction in potential fines payable by Iraqis who have overstayed their visas or are otherwise residing in Jordan illegally (probably the majority of the Iraqis currently living here).

But Other Disincentives Remain

[1](#)4. While the Jordanian move was welcomed by some Iraqi political figures and activists and was heavily covered in the Arab media, it is unclear that this partial amnesty will allay the concern of most of the affected Iraqis, as many are day laborers and the like who cannot afford to pay even the reduced fine. Despite the GOJ's commitment to the IOM not to use the OCV registration process to check immigration status (ref a), Iraqis' concerns over possible detention by Jordanian police and/or demands for fine payments (perhaps compounded by the visibly stepped-up police presence at registration locations) continue to be seen as a disincentive to OCV registration (ref a).

[1](#)5. Continued voter confusion and lack of knowledge over the purpose of the election, who is running, and why they should bother to vote is also widely cited by IOM personnel and local Iraqi sources as an important contributing factor to the low registration turnout. This was circumstantially confirmed in three conversations over the last two days with prominent Iraqis in Amman - a businessman, a parliamentary candidate, and an important tribal leader who has been an active coalition supporter. The businessman and the tribal leader both expressed a notional desire to vote, but revealed substantial confusion over election procedures and what the election was for. The parliamentary candidate (also a successful businessman) asserted that even his close

relatives "don't understand anything about this election."
Also reported in the press and confirmed anecdotally is
difficulty in producing the two Iraqi identification
documents required for registration. One businessman told us
dejectedly that he and his family have no relevant Jordanian
documents and nothing else beyond their Iraqi passports to
identify themselves as Iraqis.

HALE